(b) if so, the break-through made in this direction;

(c) whether the said approach is playing any role in the engagement between India and Pakistan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) Prime Minister had, on April 18, 2003, once again extended the hand of friendship to Pakistan. In his statement in Parliament on May 2, he had announced the decision to appoint a High Commissioner to Pakistan and to restore civil aviation links on a reciprocal basis. It had also been made clear that India would pursue a step-by-step approach to normalisation of links and that creating conditions conducive to sustained dialogue necessarily required an end to cross-border infiltration and dismantling of the infrastructure of support to terrorism in Pakistan. Subsequently, on May 26, Government indicated its willingness for the resumption of Delhi-Lahore bus service.

Following Prime Minister's initiative both countries have appointed High Commissioners. The Delhi-Lahore bus service has been resumed with effect from July 11. Technical level discussions for resumption of civil aviation are scheduled to be held on August 27-28, 2003. Both sides have released prisoner. There have also been important exchanges in the context of business, cultural and people-to-people contacts.

India is committed to resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan peacefully through direct bilateral dialogue in the spirit of Simla Agreement and Lahore Declaration. Government intends to proceed with present approach of step-by-step normalization of diplomatic and other links. Further steps would be considered based on the progress made, and confidence generated.

Statement by President of Pakistan

1989. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent statement given by President of Pakistan about the possibility of further action if the Kashmir issue is not resolved and the pressure he wants to bring on India through U.S. President.

(b) if so, Government's views on his statement; and

(c) the proposed attitude of Government in normalising the relations with Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Government was deeply disappointed by some of the comments made by President Musharraf in his interview to a news channel (NDTV) on June 14, 2003. The most distressing were his comments on Kargil and the implication that military adventurism of that nature is a legitimate instrument for furthering Pakistan's designs on Jammu and Kashmir. General Musharraf and other Pakistani leaders have also repeatedly made suggestions for a role for a third party in resolving India-Pakistan differences. Such suggestions are not in keeping with the Simla Agreement and are unacceptable.

(c) Prime Minister had, on April 18, 2003 extended the hand of friendship once again to Pakistan. Subsequently, India has taken the initiative to move in a step-by-step manner to normalise diplomatic and other links between the two countries. Government also believe that creation of a conducive atmosphere for a sustained dialogue necessarily requires an end to cross border terrorism and dismantling of its infrastructure. Progress in economic cooperation, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts would help create an environment in which difficult issues could be addressed.

Invitation to Urdu writers by Mauritius

1990. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Mauritius had invited Urdu writers from India for the World Urdu Conference in April, 2003;

(b) whether such participation from India was not allowed by Government; and

(c) if so, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes. The World Urdu Conference, originally scheduled in April 2003, was postponed to 2—6 August 2003.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.